Alcohol consumption in Spain has traditionally followed the Mediterranean drinking pattern, featuring daily drinking with meals, beer as the preferred beverage, and comparatively little drinking to intoxication. Alcohol dependence (AD), one of the most detrimental disorders caused by alcohol, was prevalent in 0.2% of women and 1.2% of men, corresponding to 31,200 women and 186,000 men in Spain with AD in 2005 in the age group of 15 to 64 year. These prevalence estimates of alcohol dependence are likely underestimated due to limitations in the World Mental Health Survey which cannot be fully corrected for; however, the estimates of AD for Spain represent the most accurate and up to date estimates available. Alcohol creates a significant health burden in Spain with 11.3 premature deaths in women per 100,000 aged 15 to 64 years, and 40.9 premature deaths in men per 100,000 in the same age group were due to alcohol consumption (data for 2004). This amounts to 8.4% of all female deaths and 12.3% of all the male deaths in this age group being attributable to alcohol consumption. A large percentage of these harms were due to heavy alcohol consumption and AD. AD is undertreated in Spain, with less than 10% of all people with AD treated. For those who are treated, psychotherapy is the most utilized form of treatment to avoid relapse. If 40% of AD patients in Spain were treated with pharmacological treatment (the most effective treatment method), 2.2% of female and 6.2% of male deaths due to AD would be prevented within one year. Thus by increasing treatment rates is an important means of reducing the alcohol-attributable mortality and health burden in Spain.

Keywords
Alcohol, dependence, mortality, treatment, Spain.